

BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING
Planning Session
July 7, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Lewis, Ms. Macklin, President Moore. Also present were Mayor John Thompson, Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager, and Isobel Storch, Esquire from the Law Offices of Patricia McGrail, L.L.C. Borough Solicitor. Absent were: Mr. Cohn and Ms. McCarthy-Johnson. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mayor Thompson indicated the intention to acknowledge officers of the Wilkinsburg Police Department for commendable work. Mayor Thompson introduced Chief Coleman to make the presentation of certificates. Several officers were called to respond to an incident and therefore were not present to receive their certificates.

Chief Coleman advised that Officer Donald Hamlin, Detective Charles Knox, and Officer Chris Minton are recognized for solving an armed robbery case that occurred June 3, 2010. Officer Brant Suley, Detective Knox and Officer Minton are recognized for solving a robbery case which occurred on Jun 4, 2010 on Mifflin Ave. Sgt. Matthew Morrison, Officer Stubbs, Officer Catanzaro and an officer from Forest Hills, Bryan Armstrong are recognized for solving two burglary cases at Braverman Arms. Officer Donald Hamlin, Sgt. Larry Singer, Sgt. Dan Cuiffi, Detective Charles Knox, and Detective Chris Minton were recognized for solving a robbery case which occurred in the 1300 block of Hill Ave.

Mayor Thompson commented on the exceptional police work which was required to solve these cases.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson arrived at 7:12 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lillie Hawkins -1419 Sloan Ave. – Commented that a tree, located on private property at 1943 McNary, fell into her back yard about a month ago. The tree is not a street tree. Ms. Storch advised that the Borough has no legal responsibility in this area. Mr. Lefebvre provided contact information for the owner. Ms. Macklin commented about her personal experience with a similar situation and suggested that Ms. Hawkins file a claim with her homeowner's insurance. Ms. Ervin questioned if the tree had damaged her home and Ms. Hawkins responded that it had not.

Judy Rodriguez – 2000 Laketon Rd. – Presented a petition requesting residential parking on Laketon Rd. between 1908-2052 Laketon Rd. on the resident side of the street between Sloan St. and Winton St. She explained that between the months of April-November, the residents do not have access to parking due to activities at Turner Field. Ms. Marcinko advised that the permit parking can be established for specific times or day as well as year. She will request that the Borough Engineer review the matter and make a recommendation.

Ernest Jones – 563 Princeton Blvd. – A parking ticket was issued to his daughter which was dismissed by the magistrate. Mr. Jones was advised by the District Magistrate that Council would need to authorize reimbursement of the towing charge incurred. Mr. Jones thanked Ms. Macklin for her appearance at the hearing.

Art Hicks – 571 Princeton Park – Questioned the date and time of the Public Safety Committee meeting and was advised that it is held on the third Wednesday of the month. He suggested rumble strips be installed as a stop intersection was not warranted per a study performed by the Borough Engineer. Ms. Marcinko advised that the project would have to be advertised for bid. He stated that vehicles are parked Princeton Blvd and Florida St. in areas that are posted "No Parking" which poses a hazard. Chief Coleman suggested dialing 911 for complaints about parking in "No Parking" areas.

Brian Maloney – Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services – There were a total of three hundred twenty nine (329) calls in June, 2010. Average emergency response time was six minutes seventeen (6 min. 17 sec.) and ten minutes nineteen (10 min. 19 sec.) for non-emergency response. Crews attended MAD DADS Father's Day celebration and Wilkinsburg Health Fair. EAPHS also gave a presentation to twenty (20) students of the Wilkinsburg Youth Police Academy. President Moore questioned whether EAPHS had received increased calls for heat related issues. Mr. Maloney advised that calls were received from individuals with respiratory distress. Ms. Macklin questioned whether there is a cooling center for Wilkinsburg residents and commented that the Wilkinsburg Library is air conditioned.

James Jones – 579 Princeton Blvd. – Commented on properties on Princeton Blvd. that are abandoned with rodents, cats, etc. Ms. Marcinko advised that these matters need to be addressed through the Code Enforcement Department and suggested Mr. Jones contact one of the officers to obtain information on the action that has been taken.

Mr. Lefebvre commented that abandoned properties which are tax delinquent for two or more years can be acquired through the Allegheny County Vacant Property Recovery Program. Ms. Storch commented that the property can also be taken to sheriff's sale.

Catherine Burke – 203 Union St.- Ms. Burke spoke on behalf of Citizen's Advisory Committee on Shade Trees regarding tree care and removal of trees on properties being demolished. Mr. Lewis questioned where the trees were located that were removed that were healthy trees. Mr. Lewis also questioned who is responsible for a tree where a property has been demolished. Ms. Storch advised that the property owner of records remains responsible. Ms. Evans commented on the efforts made to salvage trees for the Peebles Square project and the difficulty encountered with damage to the trees due to the use of heavy equipment. President Moore suggested the matter be discussed at the next Shade Tree Committee meeting. Ms. Evans suggested that the Borough arborist and Borough Engineer meet with Shade Tree Commission and return with recommendations to Council.

Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca Ave. – Commented that the flowers planted at the Borough building need to be watered. President Moore advised that she understood the Fire Department was to be watering. Ms. Luxemburg stated that she visited the Borough's compost facility and believes this to be a great resource for the Borough. She commented on the clean-up work in the linear park. She commented on the Borough's response to trees on private property. Ms. Storch advised of the Borough's legal obligation in addressing public safety hazards and that a municipal lien cannot be filed upon a request by an adjacent property owner to remove a neighbor's tree.

Gail Mitchell-Hall – Weed & Seed Site Coordinator – Provided an update on activities of the Weed and Seed Initiative. Ms. Mitchell Hall advised that a community forum was held which received media coverage. The Weed & Seed Initiative will be focusing on youth initiatives. Ms. Hall attended PCCD training at State College.

REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Thompson reported:

- Two of the officers to be recognized had to leave to handle an emergency.
- A business district walk and patrol began July 1, 2010. Patrol times are 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM.
- Sixty-nine (69) arrests were made in June.
- The Youth Police Academy is wrapping up with a graduation party to be held at Hosanna House Sherwood facility. He shared a story from Sgt. McKenith regarding positive experiences for camp attendees.
- The Week of Hope volunteers will be returning to the community to help seniors with work around their homes until August 13, 2010.
- A production company will be in town filming a movie on July 19, 2010 at Wood St. and South Ave.
- He was not able to attend 2nd Annual CONNECT Congress. There were thirteen resolutions adopted with three particularly pertaining to Wilkinsburg. Ms. Evans reported that the Congress was very well attended.
- Ms. Marcinko reported on the reverse energy auction which the Borough participated in with other communities, including the City of Pittsburgh which led the effort. Through the Borough's participation, approximately \$33,000 dollars in energy purchases will be saved at the end of the thirty five month contract.

Mr. Lewis questioned if business owners were notified of the upcoming filming schedule. Mayor Thompson advised that the production company was encouraged to use Borough businesses. Ms. Ervin questioned which streets will be used. Mayor Thompson responded that Swissvale Ave. is of particular interest for a lengthy scene.

Report from Council President- Adult Library Report:

Council President Moore reported:

- The Adult Library summer reading clubs are in full swing and will run through August 4, 2010.
- Kids can participate in "Make a Splash" and teens can participate in "Make a Wave" reading programs. Information can be obtained from the Children's Library or the Eastridge Branch of the library.
- Volunteers are needed for the VITA Tax Program held annually from February through April. Volunteers receive free training and can contact 1-800-829-1040 for more information.

Council President Moore thanked Ms. Ervin for her clean-up efforts in the Borough and especially in Ward 1. She commented that the Borough does look cleaner but more work needs to be done. She also expressed thanks to Council members for their increased respect and civility.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Capital Planning Committee- Ms. Macklin reported:

- The June meeting was cancelled due to vacations.
- The scheduled date for the meeting is the fourth (4th) Wednesday of the month and the meetings are held in Council Chambers.
- She has items for old business and new business.

Personnel Committee –Ms. Trice reported:

- The Committee met on June 9, 2010 and heard one grievance and reviewed the draft policy on progressive discipline prepared by the Borough Manager and a couple of changes were recommended.
- Four summer employees were hired for DPW staff and began work June 14, 2010.
- The next Committee meeting will be held July 14, 2010.

TCVCOG – Ms. Trice reported:

- The Board met June 24, 2010.
- All CDBG (CD 37) applications are to be submitted to the COG by July 23, 2010.
- Two bid openings for Wilkinsburg were held on June 30, 2010.
- The emergency demolition for the Tioga St. Project is awaiting an amendment to that award.
- The next meeting will be held on September 23, 2010.

Public Safety Committee –Mr. Lefebvre reported:

- Laptop computers will be installed in all Code Enforcement vehicles, along with a condensed version of the Land Management module, the end of July.
- The new phone system was installed and switched over on June 18, 2010 and will hopefully alleviate many of the issues experienced with the former system.
- Eighty-two (82) Work Orders/Service Requests were opened in the Land Management System in the month of June.
- The Fire Department received a grant for carbon monoxide detectors, smoke detectors and voice smoke (fire) alarms. Council approved the Fire Department to proceed with solicitation for bids.
- The Fire Department applied for a grant for a new fire engine and minor equipment.
- The robberies at the Hamnett Station have been solved.
- The Youth Police Academy is underway.
- The next meeting will be held on July 21, 2010 at 5:30 PM in Council Chambers.

WPJWA – Mr. Lewis reported:

- The Authority is continuing with the installation of MIU's (meter interface units - a small device that attaches to the water meter) and close to the end of installations for Wilkinsburg in order to implement monthly billing. The Authority installed 1,184 units from May 1, 2010 to June 29, 2010. 1,054 units still need to be installed.
- He encouraged residents to respond to the letter from WPJWA to arrange for the installation of the MIU's and advised that the Authority will be making face-to-face contacts. If the unit is not installed on a property, the Authority may terminate service to the property. Every effort will be made not to terminate service. If there are questions or assistance is needed, Mr. Lewis suggested contacting him at 412 403-2910 or Wilkinsburg Penn Joint Water Authority.

Mayor Thompson questioned whether the letters are being sent to the billing or service address. Mr. Lewis advised that the letters are being sent to the billing address of record. Ms. Macklin questioned whether the Borough would incur any additional fees from WPJWA for the change to monthly billing. Mr. Lewis advised that there would be no additional fees charged to the Borough.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson expressed concern regarding the potential impact on pension assets for the Wilkinsburg Fire Pension fund if contracted fire protection services are purchased from the City of Pittsburgh.

Ms. Evans commented on the County performing a walk-through of the train station and that the feasibility study is complete. She also advised that PHLF closed on the Crescent Building on June 30, 2010 and will move forward with that project. Ms. Evans advised that the Wilkinsburg Municipal Authority and Wilkinsburg Commercial and Industrial Development Authority will meet on July 13, 2010 at 6:00 PM. Finally, she advised that

The Heinz Endowments Philanthropy grants are available which are targeting Wilkinsburg and the East End. The deadline to apply is August 2, 2010 to apply and applicants must be 501(c)(3) organizations.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Macklin commented that the Police Department is understaffed and would like the advertisement for the hiring of police officers to reflect that both full-time and part-time officers are being recruited. Ms. Macklin expressed concern for both the safety of the current officers and the public. Ms. Macklin also expressed the need to reestablish staffing levels in order to reduce overtime costs. She would also like the advertisement to reflect that full-time officers must establish residency within one year of hire.

Ms. Marcinko commented that the Civil Service Rules and Regulations contain specifications as to the information which must be contained in the advertisement.

A motion was made by Ms. Macklin, second by Mr. Lewis, that the advertisement for recruitment of police officers specify both full-time and part-time.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson questioned if the hiring of part-time police officers had been discussed with Chief Coleman and/or the Personnel Committee. Mr. Lewis commented that including part-time officers in the recruitment effort will place the Borough in a position to be prepared to hire those officers if that is the direction of Council. Mr. Lefebvre questioned the dollar amounts budgeted for part-time officers and full-time officers. Ms. Marcinko replied that 25 full-time officers are budgeted and a flat dollar amount is budgeted for part-time.

Yes: Mr. Lewis, Ms. Macklin, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Trice

No: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Evans, President Moore,

Being a tie vote, the Mayor was called upon to break the tie. The Mayor voted against the motion.

Motion failed 4:5

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Macklin called attention to an article in the Borough News magazine for June 2010 which discussed that committees of Council are considered local agencies and hence the meetings should be conducted as public meetings and duly advertised. Ms. Macklin commented that she had the privilege of attending the N.O.W. Domestic Violence night. Ms. Macklin questioned Ms. McCarthy-Johnson regarding a meeting which was held concerning diversity training. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson clarified that she had a meeting with the Chief of Police and the Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee. Ms. Macklin expressed concern that new tree plantings in the Borough were not being adequately maintained. Ms. Macklin questioned if any DPW personnel have tree

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maintenance training.

President Moore requested an executive session to discuss a personnel issue.

Council recessed to executive session at approximately 8:05 PM.

Council came out of executive session and the meeting was reconvened at approximately 9:45 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Ms. Trice the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:46 PM.

Eugenia Moore, Council President